ACT 1 : MASARU

CHAPTER 13 : "PERSONAL FILE - PART 2"

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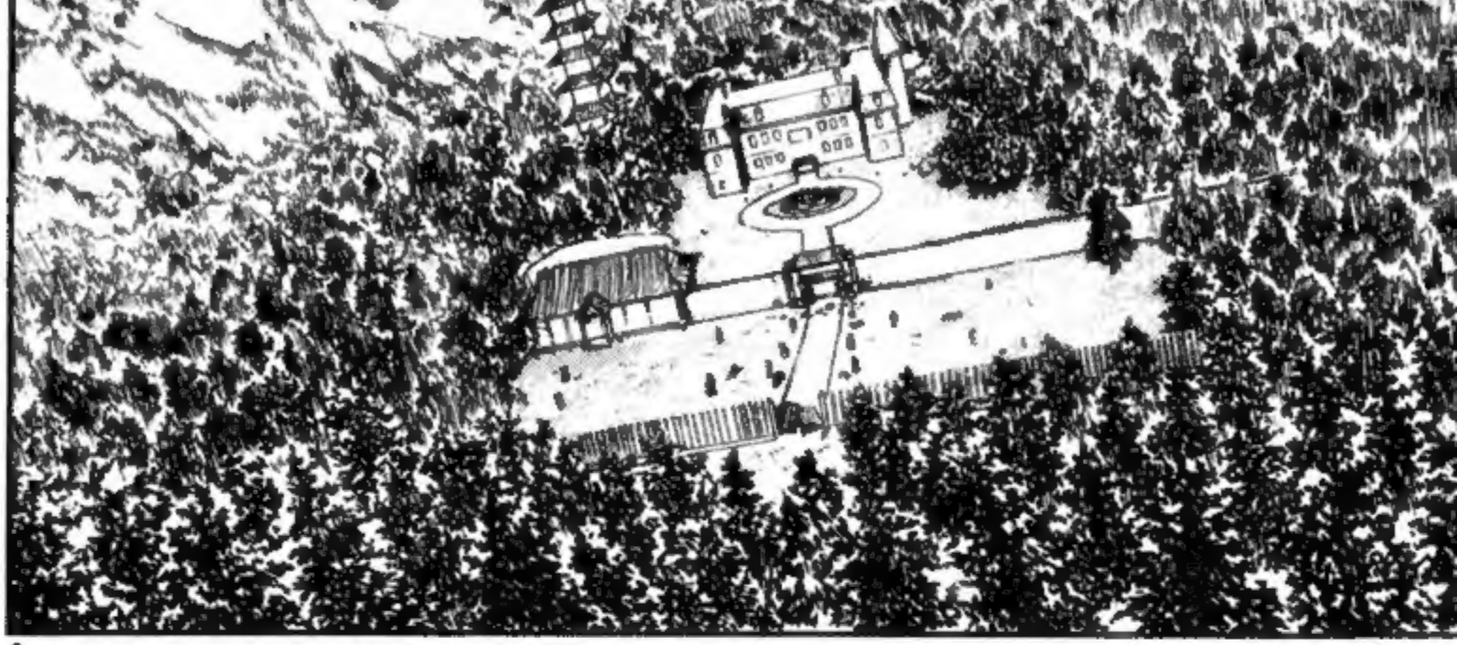
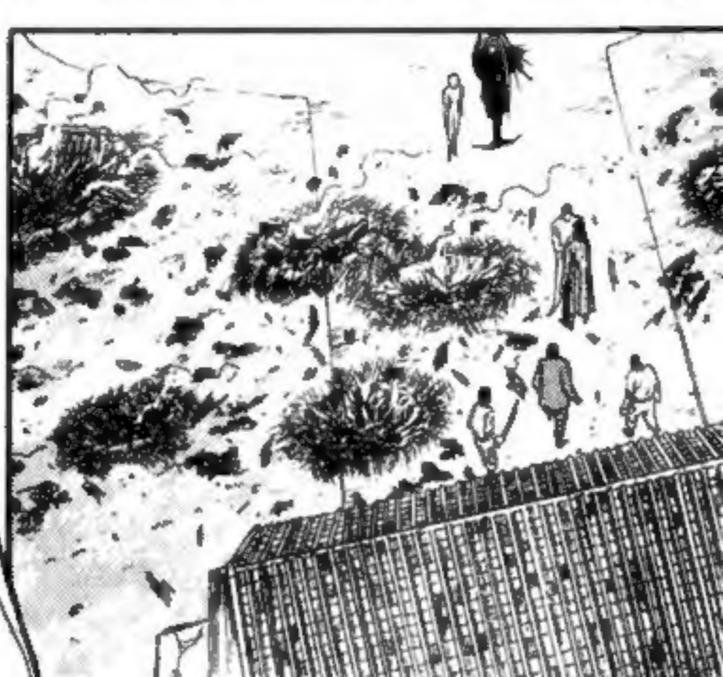


2

WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE ARE YOU FROM ?
ASHIHANA, YOU'RE GONNA ANSWER ME RIGHT NOW!



IN SUCH A TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED ERA, WHY ARE YOU STILL USING PUPPETS?
HOW CAN PUPPETS MASTERS MANIPULATE SUCH HUGE DOLLS?

YOU'RE JUST ARRIVING FROM FRANCE AND THE ONLY THING YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT IS PROTECTING MASARU WITH YOUR BIG BLACK PUPPET...

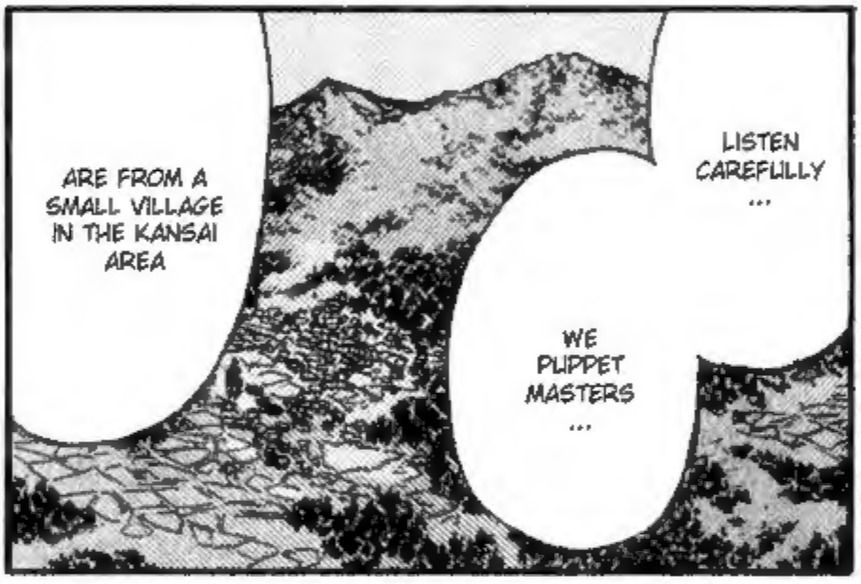
YOU TOO SHIROGANE, WHO ARE YOU?

I WILL ANSWER YOU BUT CONSIDER IT AN EXCEPTION
HEY YOU ... YOU'RE ASKING A LOT OF QUESTIONS ...

I LIKE THAT BOY ... I HAVE SOME RESPECT FOR HIM

SHUT UP HAZAMA!
THE CHIEF OF THE VILLAGE HAS FORBIDDEN TO TALK ABOUT THAT
BOSS YOU SHOULDN'T!

IN THAT VILLAGE, SINCE THE HEIAN ERA, WE'VE BEEN OFFERING SACRED PUPPET DANCES FOR THE SHINTO SANCTUARIES OF THE AREA.


ARE FROM A SMALL VILLAGE IN THE KANSAI AREA
LISTEN CAREFULLY ...
WE PUPPET MASTERS ...

THAT'S THE NAME OF OUR VILLAGE.
WE ARE CALLED "THE KUROGA PEOPLE".

SOME DANCES AND SONGS WERE CREATED IN HONOR OF THE SHINTO GODS
YEAH ...
"SACRED DANCES" ?

... WE ARE THE HEIRS OF THE PUPPET MASTERS WHO USED TO ORGANIZE THIS CELEBRATION!

THEN YOU SHALL BE PUNISHED, YOU'LL BECOME MY SON!
I'M GONNA FIND YOUUU!
WHERE ARE YOUUU, MASARUUU!
RLAN
RLAN
RLAN
RLAN
RLAN
RRRRRA
5

6

I THOUGHT THERE WERE ONLY TEXTS ABOUT TECHNIQUES OF THE CREATION OF PUPPETS...

6. Techniques of chinese manipulation
Demultiplication problem
7. Random manipulations
The iron soldier

he'll only be used to gather two dogs which will end up cutting each other's throat

Masaru is only a bait.

... IT'S ABOUT ME

THERE ...

PAH

Masaru is only a bait

puppets have become useless as well as their masters ...

BUT ...

WHAT ?!

once Shirogane has destroyed all the other puppets ... Masaru will be the trigger for the extermination of all the Kuroga's people

7

FLAP FLAP FLAP

WHERE ARE THE PAGES ON SHIROGANE ?

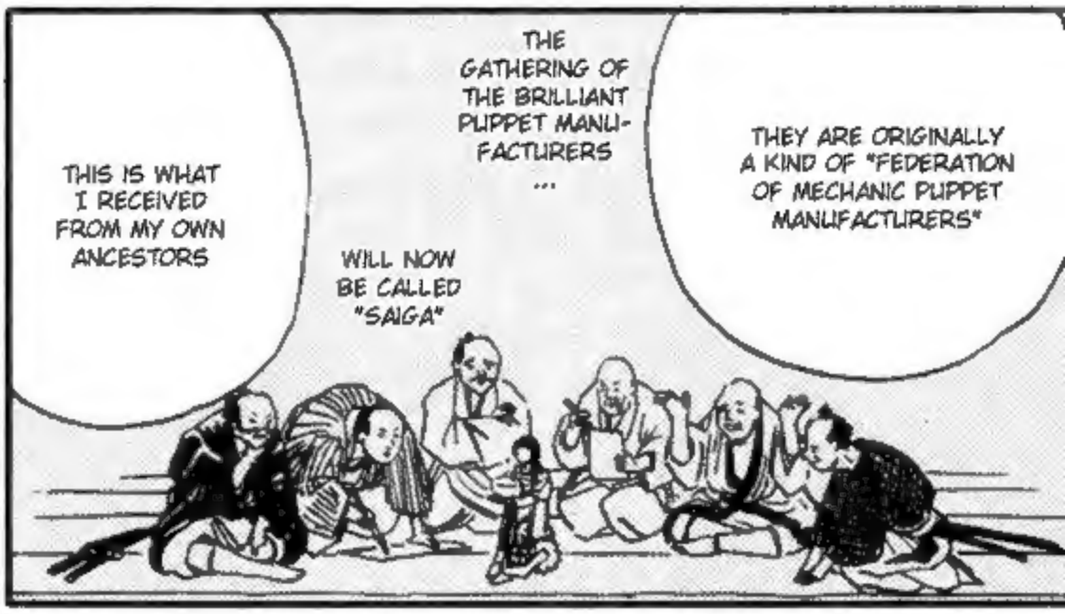
... WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?!

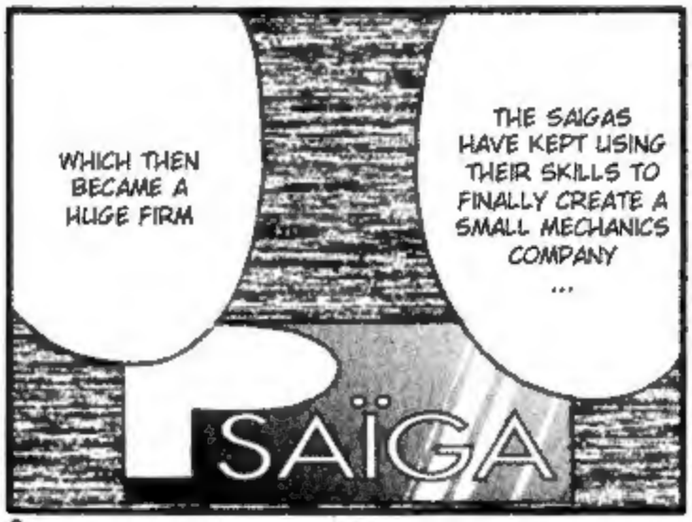
I'M JUST ... BAIT ?

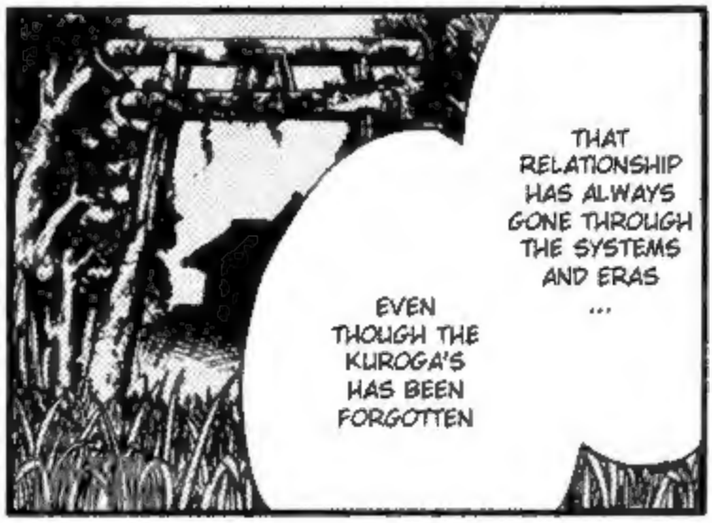
FOR AGES
THE SAIGAS HAVE BEEN MAKING PUPPETS THAT WE'VE BEEN USING ...

HEHE ...
HOW DID YOU GET FROM RELIGIOUS DANCES ...
... TO THIS ?!

SAIGAS MAKE PUPPETS AND KUROGAS MAKE THEM "DANCE"


THIS IS WHAT I RECEIVED FROM MY OWN ANCESTORS
THE GATHERING OF THE BRILLIANT PUPPET MANU-FACTURERS ...
WILL NOW BE CALLED "SAIGA"
THEY ARE ORIGINALLY A KIND OF "FEDERATION OF MECHANIC PUPPET MANUFACTURERS"


WHICH THEN BECAME A HUGE FIRM
THE SAIGAS HAVE KEPT USING THEIR SKILLS TO FINALLY CREATE A SMALL MECHANICS COMPANY ...
SAÏGA

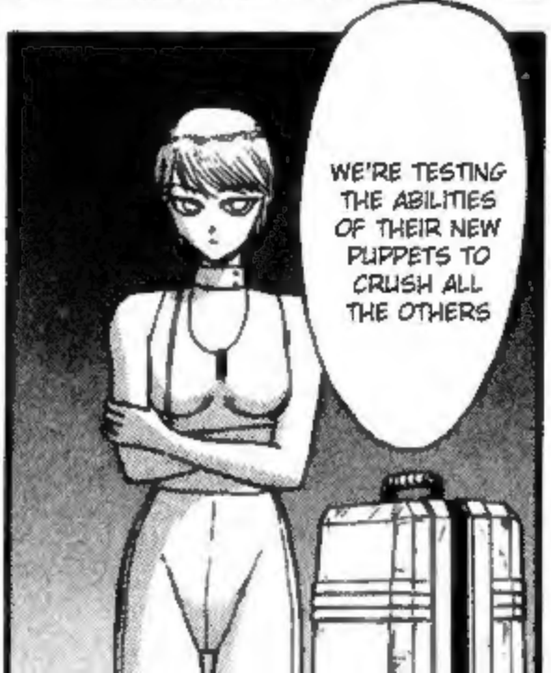

EVEN THOUGH THE KUROGA'S HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN
THAT RELATIONSHIP HAS ALWAYS GONE THROUGH THE SYSTEMS AND ERAS ...

AND THEN ...
THE FAMILY'S CHIEF OF EACH GENERATION HAS DONE RESEARCH HERE IN THIS HOUSE IN ORDER TO CREATE EVEN MORE POWER-FUL PUPPETS.
THE SAIGAS HAVE CONTINUED TO INVENT NEW PUPPETS
HOWEVER ...

...
WHAT
?
THAT'S RIGHT!
WE, THE
KUROGAS, USED
TO PAY THE
SAIGAS...
TO MAKE
PUPPETS
FOR US!
BUT...
WHY DID THEY
NEED TO MAKE
THOSE PUPPETS
?
THE ROLES
HAVE BEEN
REVERSED
...
AND NOW
THE SAIGA'S
BOSS GIVES
US A LOT
OF MONEY
...
AND ASKS US
TO TEST THEIR
INVENTIONS.

THANKS TO
THESE PUPPETS
WE, KUROGA'S
PEOPLE...
BECAME
FAMOUS
AMONG THE
THIEVES
WE'RE WILLING
TO ACCEPT EVERY
MISSION AS LONG
AS WE'RE WELL
PAID
WE'RE KNOWN AS
THE "KUROGA'S
PUPPET MASTERS"
HOWEVER
...
I WOULD HAVE
NEVER IMAGINED
THAT ONE DAY, IN
A HOUSE OF THE
SAIGAS, THE SAME
ONES WHO GAVE
US OUR PUPPPETS
...
ALL THE MEMBERS
OF THE KUROGA'S
CLAN WOULD KILL
EACH OTHER

16. SHIROGANE



TO THE LAST ONE
them too, the Saïgas' mission
the Saïgas have made puppets that Shirogane will destroy
For a long time

patiently worked out, after numerous experiments, by the Saïgas' chiefs
thanks to a special puppet...
are gonna be crushed by Shirogane
All these puppets

He's a boy. His name is Masaru.
I had a child with my "offical" mistress.
When they've disappeared too, the Saïgas' mission will be over
What's left from our legacy are the automats in this building and the last Kuroga's masters
To complete what I consider as my life's work, I got an idea
...

My other children will certainly try to kill Masaru. And, for that mission, they'll entrust Kuroga's people, whom they known since their childhood.

When I die my whole fortune will be his

MY BROTHER WILL ASK THE KUROGA'S PEOPLE TO KIDNAP MASARU AND BY DOING SO...

he will try to adopt Masaru in order to get my money

Among the former generation, there's a Zenji or someone of his kind...

WILL DESTROY ONE ANOTHER AND DISAPPEAR

THE KUROGAS AND THE PUPPETS WHICH ARE HERE ...

All the influential Saïgas' members will fight to get him back and the Kurogas, employed by these members, will thus crush each other with their puppets...

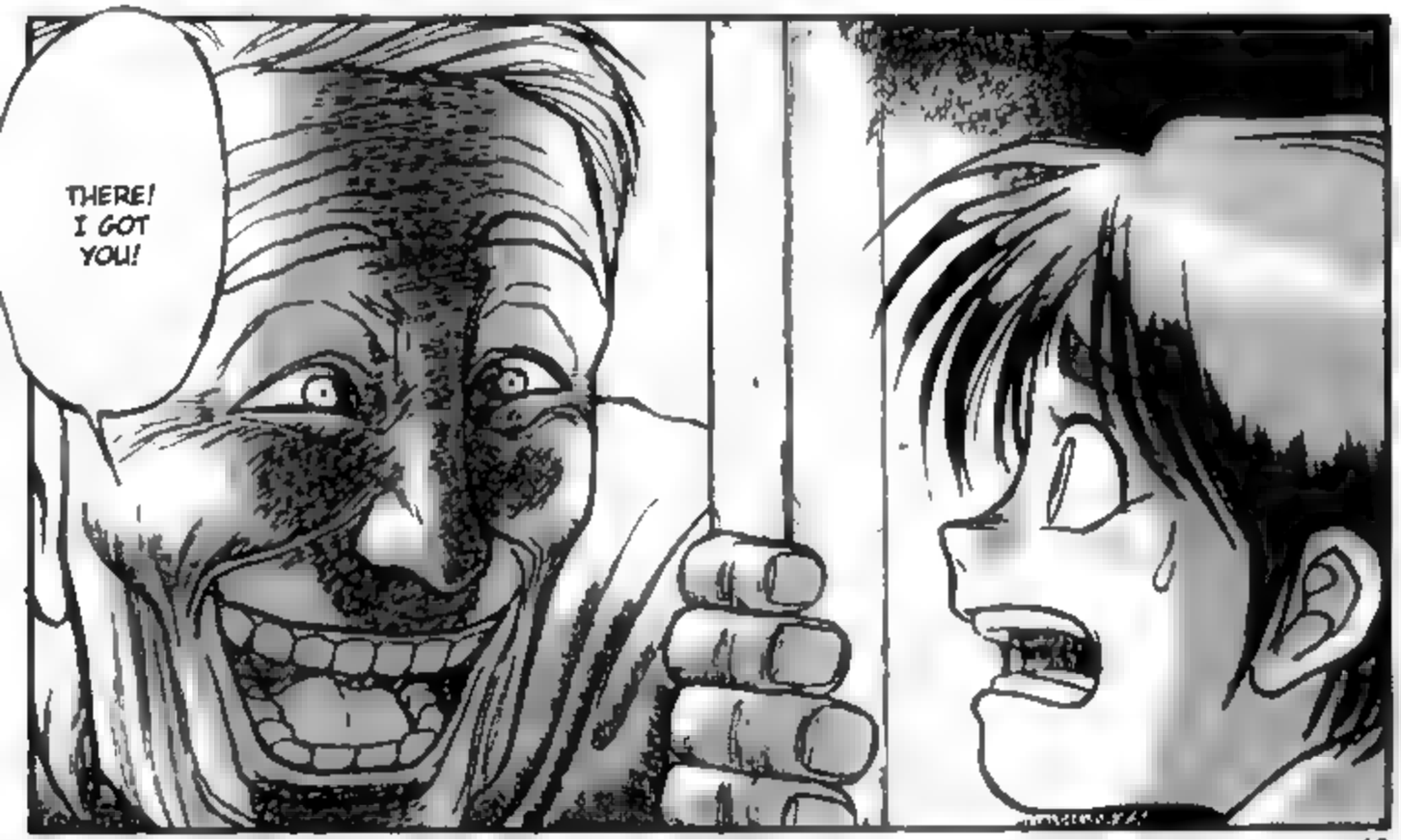
IS THAT ...

ALL I GET ...

GOH

MASARU S JUST A BAIT

ONLY FOR THAT
I.. AM BORN ..


THERE! I GOT YOU!

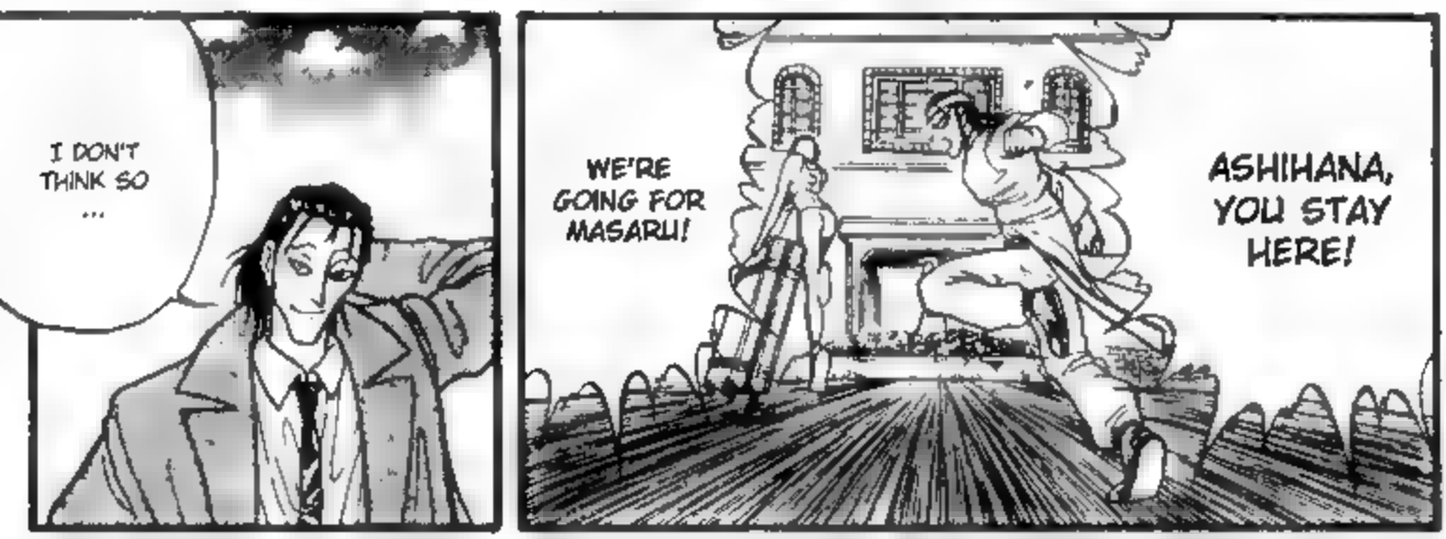
HOWEVER
..
THAT'S NORMAL!
PUPPETS MADE TO DESTROY OTHER PUPPETS
...
I AIN'T SURE I GOT IT ALL
SAIGAS MAKE PUPPETS
..
KUROGAS MANIPULATE THEM

VHHHH
..
MUCH MORE
THIS LADY MUST KNOW
..

IF YOU KEEP ON TRYING TO HURT MASTER MASARU
..

I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING AND THEN I'LL KILL YOU!

DAH
LET'S GO!
WE HAVE TO RESCUE MASARU!
HEHE!
SHE'S GOT SOME GUTS!


I DON'T THINK SO ...
WE'RE GOING FOR MASARU!
ASHIHANA, YOU STAY HERE!

AND GO GET ALL OUR PUPPET MASTERS !!
OK!
HAZAMA! GATHER OUR FORCES ON THAT SIDE!

DAH

BOMF
BOMF
BOMF
SPAH

WHAT DOES THAT CHANGE FOR ME ?!
BOMF
DAN
HA HA HA HA !!
I'VE KNOWN MY BROTHER'S PLANS FOR A WHILE!
SPAH

DON'T YOU THINK SO ?!
HA HA!
I'LL BE THE WINNER IN THE END!

IF THE KUROGAS ENJOY KILLING ONE ANOTHER AROUND US ...

THAT'S WHY YOU'D BETTER NOT OPPOSE ME!
YOU ARE NOTHING!
HEUH
DON'T YOU GET IT ?
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF MASARU ...
YOU'RE JUST A BAIT, IT'S WRITTEN ON YOUR FATHER'S BOOK!
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BECOMING MY ADOPTIVE SON!
HHH
HHH
OHH

I MUST KEEP SMILING ...
A SAIGA? WALKING TO SCHOOL?
WE DON'T WANT YOU IN OUR SCHOOL, YOU LOSER!
IONSPALE

NARUMI
THAT'S TRUE ...
YOU AND ME ARE HAVE A LOT IN COMMON
CRAC

THAT'S ABSOLUTELY TRUE.
YES...

YOU COULD BECOME MUCH STRONGER THAN ME!
IF YOU REALLY WANT ...
A BAIT !
I AIN'T JUST ...

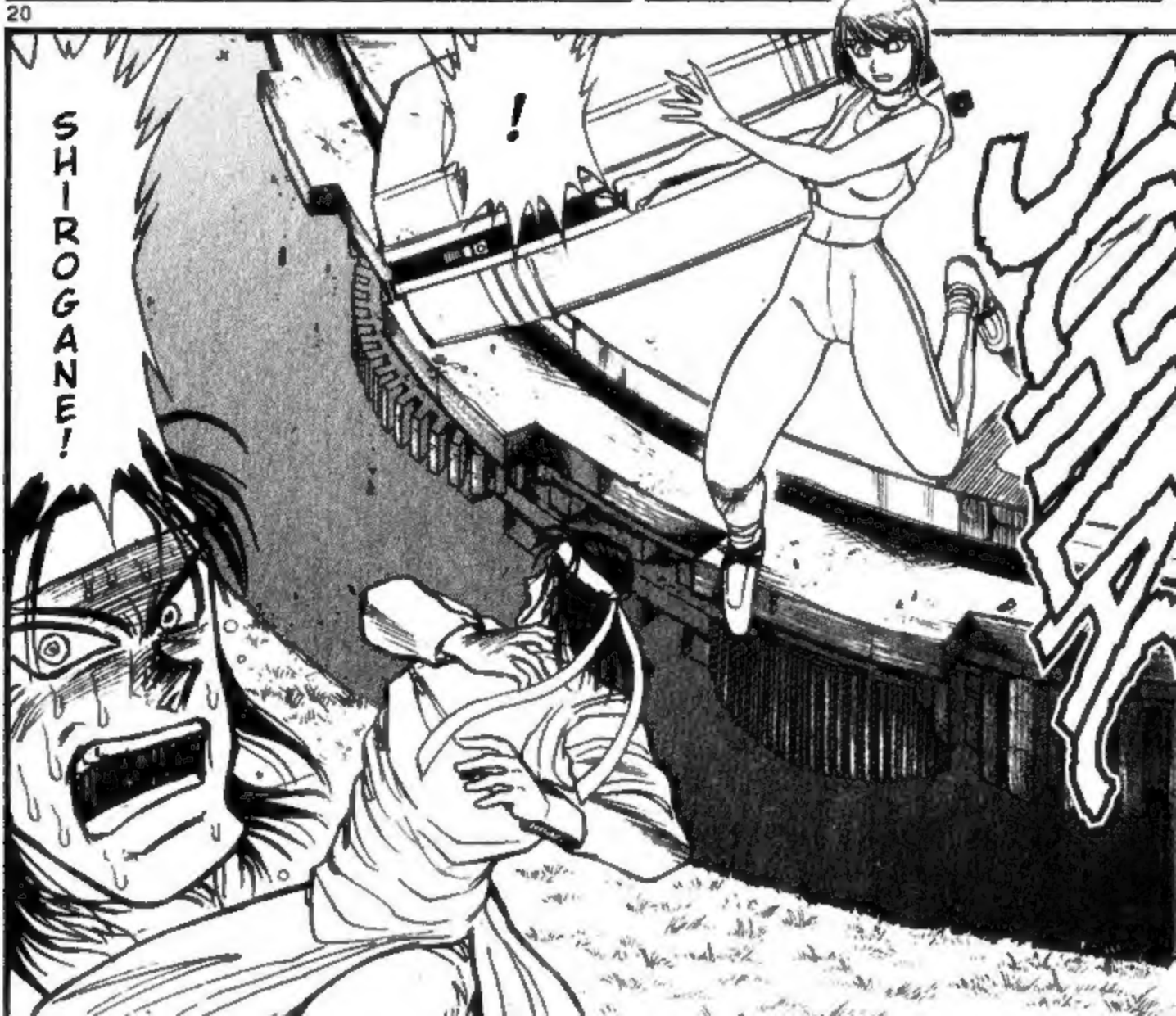
WHAT ?!
WHAT DID YOU SAY MASARU ?

NEVER ...
NO...
SAY IT AGAIN, DAMN BRAT !

YOUR SON!
I WILL NEVER BE...

THERE ARE TRAPS ALL OVER THE PLACE! ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!
NARUMI, WATCH OUT!
TAN TAN TAN
WE'RE COMING MASARU !

NOOO! I CAN'T HAVE A CRISIS NOW!
GLOUPS
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO THINK ABOUT ...


SHIROGANE!
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